

**GERTRUDE OTIS BERYLSON**



# **Gertrude Otis Berylson**

---

## **In Memoriam**

---

Edited by  
**C. P. BERYLSON**

**“Love is immortal.”**

## Gertrude Otis Berylson

(From the Liberty Register, January 24, 1919.)

Gertrude Otis Berylson died at St. Luke's Hospital, New York, on Tuesday afternoon, the 14th inst. She suffered from a complication of diseases which resulted in a hemorrhage of the brain. The funeral took place at the chapel of St. Luke's Hospital on Thursday, the Rev. Mr. Monk officiating. The body was cremated at Fresh Pond.

Mrs. Berylson was born in Chicago, Ill., August 16, 1862, and was the daughter of Newton S. and Sarah M. Otis. She is survived by her husband, C. P. Berylson of Liberty, two sisters, Mary Macdonald of Brooklyn and Ethel Jeremiah of New York, and one brother, Newton Leroy Otis of New York.

Mrs. Berylson was a remarkable woman. She had the brain of a philosopher and the heart of a child. She was independent in her thoughts and all her convictions were the children of her own brain. She was deeply religious, but not in the conventional sense of the word. She examined all systems of religion and philosophy and became convinced that all of them contained some grain of truth but that none of them monopolized all the truth. She accepted what to her appeared to be the truth and rejected all the rest. She had a keen mind and was able to read and digest the most abstruse works on philosophy and science. Although she was born and bred in the city and lived on a farm only twelve years, she mastered scientific farming in several branches and was an authority on poultry, fruit, vegetables and flowers. There are not many men in Sullivan County who can talk about farming as intelligently and scientifically as she could. She read the best literature in the English language and her favorite writers were Browning, Walt Whitman, Em-

erson, Thoreau, John Burroughs, Mark Twain and Howells. She was a lover of the beautiful. Music thrilled her, a beautiful sunset was an inspiration to her, and her extensive flower gardens, which were almost exclusively under her own care, were the delight of her soul.

Her married life was ideal. For many years she and her husband struggled with ill health and other adverse conditions, and yet she was happy. She intensely loved her husband, and to him she was all that makes life worth living and he idealized her being. She had an affectionate nature and a great capacity for making friends. She was entirely unselfish and always wanted to share her possessions with others. To know her was to love her. She leaves many friends to mourn her loss.

I do not know whether death is the end of life or the beginning of another, but to me she is immortal and her beautiful memory will live forever.

## Thoughts on Death

After all, it may be best, just in the happiest, sunniest hour of all the voyage, while eager winds are kissing every sail, to dash against the unseen rock, and in an instant to hear the billows roar above a sunken ship. For whether in mid-sea or among the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck at last must mark the end of each and all. And every life, no matter if its every hour is rich with love and every moment jeweled with a joy, will at its close become a tragedy as sad and deep and dark as can be woven of the warp and woof of mystery and death.

Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word; but in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing.

The record of a generous life runs like a vine around the memory of our dead, and every sweet, unselfish act is now a perfumed flower.

Why should we fear that which will come to all that is? We cannot tell, we do not know, which is the greater blessing—life or death. We cannot say that death is not good. We do not know whether the night here is not somewhere else a dawn. Neither can we tell which is the more fortunate—the child dying in its mother's arms, before its lips have learned to form a word, or he who journeys all the length of life's uneven road, painfully taking the last slow steps with staff and crutch.

May be that death gives all there is of worth to life. If those we press and strain within our arms could never die, perhaps that love would wither from the earth. May be this common fate treads from out the paths between

our hearts the weeds of selfishness and hate. And I would rather live and love where death is king than have eternal life where love is not. Another life is naught unless we know and love again the ones who love us here.

The dead do not suffer. If they live again, their lives will surely be as good as ours. We have no fear. We are all children of the same mother, and the same fate awaits us all. We, too, have our religion, and it is this: Help for the living—Hope for the dead.

All wish for happiness beyond this life. All hope to meet again the loved and lost. In every heart there grows this sacred flower. Immortality is a word that Hope through all the ages has been whispering to Love. The miracle of thought we cannot understand. The mystery of life and death we cannot comprehend. This chaos called the world has never been explained. The golden bridge of life from gloom emerges and on shadow rests. Beyond this we do not know. Fate is speechless, destiny is dumb, and the secret of the future has never yet been told. We love; we wait; we hope. The more we love, the more we fear. Upon the tenderest heart the deepest shadows fall. All paths, whether filled with thorns or flowers, end here. Here success and failure are the same. The rag of wretchedness and the purple robe of power all difference and distinction lose in this democracy of death. Character survives; goodness lives; love is immortal.

When the Angel of Death—the masked and voiceless—enters the door of home, there come with her all the daughters of Compassion, and of these Love and Hope remain forever.

To-day we give back to Mother Nature, to her clasp and kiss, one of the bravest, sweetest souls that ever lived in human clay.

With morn, with noon, with night, with changing clouds and changeless stars; with grass and trees and birds, with leaf and bud, with flower and blossoming vine—with all the sweet influences of nature, we leave our dead.

ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.



## Some of Her Views

### HER DESIRE.

(October 14, 1898.)

I need order, method, continuity, concentration, activity and exactness, firmness with gentleness, freedom from personalities.

These things can best be developed by persistently doing the smallest action carefully, by allowing no mental digression from the work in hand until finished, by formulating a method to be followed each day and by modifications make it meet the needs of the day; by holding faithfully to the present day and its need. I am more conscious to-day of helplessness in these directions because I am using objective faculty and becoming self-active. I must remember that all strength is a growth, is a use of the fiber and not a straining of the fiber, and even the little use will bring increasing strength. This unsatisfied condition comes because of the impulse of life and is to be welcomed, as it must come some time, and better now than any other time. Division is weakening and can only be accepted as an expediency to be indulged in less and less together with all other forms of mental dissipation. This does not apply to recreation, which is a reaction from work to active amusement.

I know I shall attain this steadfastness and stability, and this is the birth time of the attributes of a strong, vigorous, tender woman such as I shall be.

---

### ON GOOD CITIZENSHIP.

(From the Liberty Register)

Good citizenship is no more instinctive to children than arithmetic or spelling. We spend millions of dollars a year and many years of a child's life teaching it to

read, write, cypher, etc. How much time is devoted to instructing the child how to become a good citizen?

Something does not come out of nothing. An adult does not suddenly awake to the responsibility of good citizenship, nor does he suddenly identify himself with the common good as separated from his own private interests. That is why politics in the village, town, city, state and nation is in such bad condition. It is the private interest first, last and always. What are our public schools doing to change this state of affairs? Are they working to make better citizens of the coming generation—to make them more intelligent, more sympathetic, more disinterested in public affairs?

School life is the first experience in the life of the child when all children have equal rights; it is their first experience in public life. It is the place where all races, all nationalities, all religions, meet on a neutral ground for the common need of becoming the best kind of scholars, the best kind of men and women, the best kind of citizens. The money for this end comes by taxation from all property owners, not by voluntary contributions. There is no other way, for otherwise not all children would be equal, not all would have the same rights, to be respected by all others. Some would not be considered when matters pertaining to the religion of the majority are concerned, and would suffer social ostracism for race, religion and class reasons.

These thoughts were suggested by the entertainment held in our district school last Friday evening. The room was filled with pupils from this school and from other districts, and their parents, friends and neighbors. The Christmas tree had decorations of all kinds and was filled with presents. A good part of the exercise was of a religious nature. All the pupils were present, but one lonely little Jewish child of about ten years of age, the only Jewish child among the pupils, a future citizen working as hard as the others to become a good scholar. What is the natural reaction on the minds of the children of this school? What are the feelings of that little Jewish scholar in this "left-out" state of affairs dominated by

the majority rule? Where is the teaching of good citizenship, equal rights and common justice to begin? Would it not have been better if the entertainment had included him, his little recitation or song, his part in the school festivities? Would not this have made for larger sympathies, wider understanding and better social conditions in the school life and beyond into the neighborhood life? If the entertainment is of such nature that it excludes even one child, it must have a demoralizing influence upon all the children, as it teaches the majority that they can trample with impunity upon the rights of the minority.

Israel Zangwill speaks of the United States as the "melting pot" in which men of different races, nationalities and religions are converted into American citizens. This should be especially true of our public schools. If the public school cannot accomplish this it fails in its fundamental purpose, for the mere acquisition of the three R's is not education. As Mark Twain says, good citizenship is more important than arithmetic. It is absurd to talk about the flag and then violate the fundamental principles of justice.

To avoid all misunderstanding I wish to say that the writer of this letter is an American woman, born of Christian parents, and is entitled to be called a Daughter of the Revolution. Her ancestors came into the "melting pot" some three hundred years ago.

## Appreciation

(Extracts from Letters)

### MR. FRANK A. MANNY.

We have just learned of your great loss. We count your wife among our valued friends. Often when I write a review or read a live book I think of her as one of the few who would enjoy it.

You gave her great happiness and satisfaction. May life still have much for you.

### MISS E. F. HANSON.

Gertrude lived a life of sacrifice for the family so many years. As a little girl she was always giving up her way, and she was so sweet about it. . . . As a child and young girl her life was so full of promise—gifted in art, unusually so in music; a fine memory and a brilliant mind—what could she not have accomplished for good in the world?

### MISS SARAH HOLMES.

When one has lost one's very best, there is no comfort and there are no words. I am sure that you know that our hearts are full of the thought of you in these days. What happens to all who love deeply, if they live, is that they lose what they have loved. It is the price we must pay for living and loving. And yet how infinitely "better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all."

### MRS. GRACE MACDONALD.

I can feel your unhappiness and loneliness and I sympathize with you deeply. Gertrude was of the kind that the world can least spare.

### MRS. MABEL C. ALBEE.

I cannot realize that she is gone. I feel I have lost a good friend. I thought so much of her.

**MRS. JANET B. OSTRANDER.**

I feel as though I had lost a dear friend and one whom I always loved to see. She was always so cordial, so full of enthusiasm on all subjects, such a fund of information to impart, giving herself so willingly to all things that made for progress, that her going is a distinct loss to all with whom she came in contact.

My heart goes out to you in sympathy, for your loss is so great in every way. She was your home-maker, your companion in every interest of life, but you will have the lovely memory of these wonderful years together.

**MRS. B. K. HEIL.**

I think I can appreciate your loss, knowing Mrs. Berylson as a loving wife, loyal friend, good comrade. While I realize that anything I may say cannot do much good, it may be a little comfort to you to know that some one understands and that my sympathy is heartfelt.

**MR. GEORGE SCHUMM.**

Your card announcing the passing of Gertrude gave us all a rude shock. I wish I might at this moment say something that would be a comfort to you, but at such times one realizes more than ever his utter helplessness, and even feels constrained to summon his last ounce of energy to keep at a distance his own sense of discouragement.

**MRS. SALLY WAKEMAN.**

Since my dear mother's death I have been able to enter into the grief of my friends as I never could before. The only thing that helped me at all was the thought that mother was always wishing and working for my happiness, and so did your lost one.

**MRS. ANNIE E. PARKHURST.**

Nothing can ever seem just the same, but I speak as one who has been through the shadows when I say that life still holds very much that is worth while so long as we have a degree of health to exert ourselves for any good purpose.

**MRS. POLLY YOUNG KELLER.**

Mr. Keller and myself want to express our deep sympathy in your very great loss. It was a real inspiration to meet Mrs. Berylson. We always had such nice talks of flowers and little children whenever she and I met, and I shall miss her. Though we met seldom, she was so full of power and forceful attractiveness that everyone who knew her will be richer for her acquaintance.

**MRS. MAY HURD DENTON.**

Words are feeble, but you know that we loved no friends more and very few as much as we did Gertrude, and she will live as long as we do in our thoughts and feelings. She was a lovely, noble woman, and the way she loved you will be your dearest memory.

**MRS. E. H. SCHUMM.**

I want to cling to the hope that unknown and unexpected sources of strength and courage open up in the soul in its darkest hour. Somehow it must be so. Life must have the power of acquiring a new purport. How else could we go on living when our own little world has fallen into ruin? My heart is heavy and sad for you, and I am trying to let the only ray of light that I can glimpse get to you somehow.

**MR. H. W. BIGELOW.**

Words seem empty indeed when one endeavors to express his feelings of sympathy for one who is passing through the valley of deep sorrow, but I want you to know that my sincere sympathies go out to you in these days when you mourn the loss of your dear companion.

**MRS. AGNES KAHN.**

Nobody in the whole wide world had the deep understanding of the beautiful love and happiness which existed between you and Gertrude. Never does a day pass but that the teachings and inspirations which I received from dear Gertrude help me in my problems. I feel so indebted to our dear, sweet friend that she will always be more than a memory to me. She will live with me in the inspiration and love which I give to my babies.

**MRS. MARY E. MACDONALD.**

Your wonderful companion has passed on, and I know she tells me to ask you to learn as quickly as possible to accept life as it is.

**MISS VIOLA DAVIS.**

I feel I must write you a few lines and tell you of my sympathy and sorrow. I know you will miss her more than anyone else will. I am thankful I saw dear Gertrude this winter.

**MRS. ETHEL JEREMIAH.**

If we can only let our beautiful memories overlay our sorrows and so bring her nearer to us, it is a great help. We have to struggle for resignation to what cannot be helped, and sometimes our sorrows, when taken right, do so much help to humanity, for the grief makes us tender and of help to others. Feeling our loved are constantly at our side, even if not seen, heard or touched, will help.

**MR. HARRY T. KAHN.**

Gertrude's words of advice, counsel and philosophy have always been steady companions to me. I lost a friend that I idealized as a mother. I do not think you know how I revered her. To me she was a most wonderful woman, and her going is a great sorrow to me. . . . Gertrude will live forever. Her soul will predominate. Her heart was as big as the earth itself.

**MR. M. D. BLATCHLY.**

I was shocked and grieved to learn of the death of Mrs. Berylson. Both Mrs. Blatchly and myself thoroughly enjoyed our brief acquaintance, and I assure you that you have my deepest sympathy.

**MRS. ELLA BAIRD WINNE.**

I remember so well the Sunday I visited your home, the lovely flowers you and Gertrude had cared for and the beautiful bouquet she gave my sisters and me. Could you find any comfort in the thought that at times your dear one might come close to you in spirit, wishing to make your burden less heavy?

**MRS. BERTIE F. GREEN.**

Dear Mrs. Berylson's death was a shock to me, even though I realized that she could not get well. Try to bear it bravely. I know that it is hard. Time alone can heal such wounds and the scars always remain.

**MR. ERNEST WINNE.**

On the surface our life experience and understanding of super-physical things have been different; but to me the very fact that in spite of such different view-points humans find in each other a substantial, sure and persistent soul character, giving a spontaneous mental recognition and heart satisfaction that manifests and ever abides as a love transcending all we feel toward lesser things, is to me one of the strongest evidences that our essential individuality is not only deathless but becomes even more and more wise, loving and beneficent. . . . I trust it may be at least of some cheer to you to know that you are not left wholly and indifferently alone in your sorrow, but that you have the sincerest heart sympathy of ourselves and, I am sure, of many others who know you.

**MRS. IDA BALLOU ROBINSON.**

I want to express my sympathy for your loss. Even when life is not so harmonious, one feels so desolately lonely when parted by death; but when one is so tenderly loved, nothing can be said. Your union with Gertrude was one of those few real marriages where life is one harmonious whole.

**MISS CARRIE D. DENTON.**

I cannot tell you how sorry I am that your happy life together has met with this interruption. It was a happy life, I know, in spite of all hardships, for no matter what came you could face it bravely because you could face it together. . . . I failed to consider that your love for each other would carry you triumphantly over even the hardest places. She knew she would be happy and she was right. She was happy, and it must be a great comfort to you now to feel that in your companionship and love she knew the real happiness and contentment that I imagine few women do know.



**MRS. B. ESTHER SINGER.**

How can one lose so dear a soul and assume mute silence without an expression of what Mrs. Berylson meant to me? She was one of the very few who knew me so well and voluntarily filled in my heart the place of a mother. She consoled me, comforted me, enjoyed my confidences, shared my sorrows as well as joys, and many a time helped me to turn clouds into sunshine. She was the soul of genuine friendship; she had a tender heart and an inspiring personality, and her premature death is a shock and loss not easily forgotten. My consolation, however, is that I was one of the fortunate to have been so intimately associated with her and benefited by her generosity of heart and soul.





